

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

NEW YORK TIMES
28 JUNE 1981

Moscow Calls U.S. Decision to Sell Arms to China 'Highly Dangerous'

By JOHN F. BURNS

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, June 27 — In its most authoritative comment yet on the United States decision to sell arms to China, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda described the move today as "an escalation of reckless policy" that was "highly dangerous for the cause of peace."

"The Soviet Union cannot remain indifferent to the new dangerous turn in the Chinese-American relations, especially to the plans of supplying China with modern American weapons, military equipment and technology," the Pravda article said. "These actions by Washington and Peking can only be assessed as hostile towards our country."

The article continued: "The Soviet Union will take such measures that will be dictated by the emerging situation. Nobody should doubt that the Soviet people, who have good nerves and powerful means of curbing aggression, will not yield to provocations and will be able to stand up for themselves, to defend the interests of their friends and allies."

The article appeared at length on an inside page of Pravda devoted to foreign affairs. Its significance arose from the fact that it was attributed to "I. Aleksandrov," a pseudonym that generally authenticates a commentary as reflecting authoritative Kremlin views.

Previous Soviet reaction to Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr.'s visit to Peking this month had been partial and mostly in the form of commentaries by Tass, the official press agency. The United States decision to sell modern arms to China was announced during Mr. Haig's visit.

The article dismissed the reservations expressed by American officials, who have said that any actual arms sales to Peking will be decided on a case-by-case basis and within statutory restraints, such as the one forbidding the use of such American weapons for offensive purposes.

Pravda, saying that "the State Department avoids calling things by their

names," said Mr. Haig's announcement opened the way for Peking to buy guidance systems for strategic missiles, military communications equipment and "all types of combat equipment, from anti-tank missiles to fighter-bombers."

It said the hallmark of Mr. Haig's talks with the Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, and others was hostility to the Soviet Union, with the emphasis on broadening the military aspects of the relationship between the two nations. "It can be said that Haig was on a mission in Peking as a general in civilian uniform," it said.

The article went on to give Soviet readers the first full account of the hitherto-secret arrangement by which the United States and China maintain a joint electronic intelligence-gathering station in western China near the Soviet border.

Officials in Washington, disclosing the station's existence while Mr. Haig was in Peking, said it opened last year to monitor Soviet missile tests from two sites from which rockets are launched across Siberia. The station replaced two in Iran that were lost after the Shah's overthrow.

The Pravda article, however, offered no comment on the missile-monitoring agreement. Western diplomats here have suggested that the Soviet leaders may have decided not to make a major issue out of the missile surveillance because they have similar monitoring facilities in Cuba and aboard Soviet vessels off United States coasts. The diplomats also suggested that Moscow realizes that effective monitoring will be crucial to both

sides in any new strategic arms treaty of the kind that the Soviet leader, Leonid I. Brezhnev, again urged this week.

By contrast, the article used unusually strong language in assessing the prospective arms sales to China. It said the Reagan Administration hoped to channel China's "expansionism" against the Soviet Union, but it predicted that the arms would be used against Peking's neighbors, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Afghanistan, as well as against United States allies in the region.

Goals Seen as Diverging

While Washington and Peking have a joint goal in isolating Vietnam and Cambodia, which is occupied by Vietnamese troops, their long-range goals diverged, the article said. While the United States sees the "anti-Sovietism" of the Chinese leadership as useful to its overall effort to counter Moscow, China is interested in setting up a nuclear confrontation between the two superpowers from which China would emerge dominant.

"Peking has its own interest to pursue," the article said, "namely, to set the United States and the Soviet Union against each other so as to be able to dominate the world after a nuclear conflict which, according to Peking's plans, will annihilate America and Europe but possibly spare some dozen millions or a couple of hundred million of the Chinese. After all, China's population is double that of the United States and Western Europe taken together."

But the article implied that China was courting Soviet military annihilation by accepting "the disgraceful role of a junior partner" to the United States.

"There is an impression that Peking does not seriously think over the dangerous consequences of the risky game with the destiny of its own people," it said.